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Obama's First Year: Protectionist Trade Agenda Costs American Consumers

Day 13 – Feb. 1: The European Union [warns](#) the US of serious ramifications, including an international trade war, if the President pursued a “Buy American Policy”.

Day 29 – February 17: Obama signs the “Stimulus” bill and violates his transparency pledge to the American people that he will allow legislation to be posted online for five full days before signing it.

The “stimulus” still includes “Buy American” protectionist language. U.S. cities and some states aren't obligated to follow the rules of the World Trade Organization and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

"I agree that we can't send a protectionist message," Obama said in an [interview](#) earlier in the month.

Day 65 – March 25: Mexico [retaliates](#) in response to the U.S. violation of NAFTA in the “Omnibus Spending Bill” by increasing tariffs on 90 U.S products. President Obama had inserted a provision in the bill that denied funding for a two-year-old pilot program which allowed some Mexican trucks to operate in the U.S.

"We consider that the United States is mistaken, protectionist and clearly violating the treaty," stated Mexico's Economy Secretary, Gerardo Ruiz Mateos.

Such [protectionism](#) favored by the Obama Administration only leads the US into an economic sinkhole from which it is very difficult to recover.

Day 165 – July 3: World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick warns that protectionism could threaten recovery from a global recession. “It seems appealing in countries to buy their own national products...Buy America. Buy Canada. Buy Chile. Buy China. But that's the road to the problem that exacerbated the downturn in the 1930s and led to the Great Depression.”

Day 235 – September 11: President Obama yet *again* broke his campaign promise to not raise taxes when he announced the new tariff on [Chinese tire imports](#). ATR President Grover Norquist [stresses to the American people](#) that **“A tariff is nothing more than a tax on consumers.”** This tariff in particular is a knife in the back for families making under \$250,000 a year, since the tax applies primarily to lower-end tires.

Day 254 – September 30: Obama jumps in bed with labor unions when he humors their desire for more [protectionism against free trade imports](#).

Day 277 – November 23: The Obama Administration still [struggles to pass](#) the Colombia, Korea, and Panama Free Trade Agreements which would open trade between the US and these respective countries. The AFL-CIO and other big labor organizations in the pocket of the government play a key role in halting progress on free trade.

Day 345 – December 30: In what we're *sure* was a happy end-of-the-year surprise to ailing US industries, another tariff was announced [against Chinese steel](#). President Obama, now one of the first presidents in history to anger both the American people AND the Chinese government simultaneously, makes his protectionist policy blatantly and painfully obvious to the American consumer. It hardly sounds like the same man who [told the G20 Summit](#) **“History shows us that when nations fail to cooperate, when they turn away from one another, when they turn inward, the price for our people only grows.”**

Day 354 – January 8: An article [appearing in Reuters](#) urges the Obama Administration to hurry up and pass the Free Trade Agreements for the sake of the US economy. But conservatives are still fearful that given the 2010 election year, Democrats won't want to pass legislation that will divide the party. Especially since they're already in pretty big trouble...

Day 357 – January 11: The [WTO is investigating](#) President Obama's tariff on imported Chinese tires. “The panel will be asked to evaluate whether the U.S. tariffs violate rules governing trade among the WTO's 153 members.” Meanwhile, [Jeff Jacoby of the Boston Globe](#) reminds us why protectionism only harms the home economy.

Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all tax increases. For more information or to arrange an interview please contact John Kartch at (202) 785-0266 or by email at jkartch@atr.org.